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Personal Affairs

A Guide to Widowed Support Groups

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SUMMARY of CHANGE

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A Guide to Widowed Support Groups

Not applicable.

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Personal Affairs

A Guide to Widowed Support Groups

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History. Not applicable.

Summary. This pamphlet provides guidance for planning, operating and evaluating Widowed Support Groups; it is to be used with AR 608-1.

Applicability. This pamphlet applies to the Active Army. It also applies to the Army National Guard (ARNG), the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) while on active duty, Army retirees and family members.

Proponent and exception authority. The proponent agency of this pamphlet is the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

Impact on Unit Manning System. This pamphlet contains information that affects the Unit Manning System. It establishes the need to support family members in an effort to minimize personal, emotional, and financial

stress associated with the death of a spouse.

Interim changes. Interim changes are not official unless they are authenticated by the Adjutant General. Users will destroy interim changes on their expiration dates unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

Suggested Improvements. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to HQDA (DACFFSA), ALEX VA 22331-0521).

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Glossary

Chapter 1 Introduction

1-1. The need for an Army Widowed Support Group Program

a. Mission readiness and effectiveness are priority items for Army commands. Army leaders recognize that well-constructed family support programs that are sensitive to “people needs” are important factors in achieving mission readiness. Knowing that the Army is actively prepared to care for families in time of tragedy significantly reduces stress. Death is a very real risk of the soldier’s unlimited liability contract. In peacetime, there are about 950 active duty deaths and 12,000 retiree deaths annually. Hostile actions and tragic events like the Gander, Newfoundland Air Crash significantly increase these numbers. It is important that a system be in place to meet all family support needs that may arise especially when fatal tragedies occur. An active Widowed Support Group (WSG) Program designed for Army families meets these needs.

b. After the funeral, widowed persons are often left alone in altered life circumstances for which there has been virtually no preparation. People experiencing acute grief and the dilemma of role transition need help to reenter our society designed for couples. The engagement prior to marriage is a period of transition to help an individual disengage from the role of child or single person and to engage themselves in the role of husband or wife. Something similar is needed at the end of the family cycle to help an individual move from their role as husband or wife to widow or widower. A WSG program provides a systematic way to support the bereaved and facilitate a healthy transition to a new but acceptable role.

c. A Widowed Support Group is a mutual self-help organization of trained widowed people who provide one on one practical, emotional and experiential support to newly bereaved widows and widowers in their community. They meet as a group periodically to discuss concerns of mutual interest and organize social activities. They may assist the Casualty Affairs Office as needed.

d. Widowed Support Group programs are not built in a day but require time and effort from a number of sources. A WSG provides a centralized way to assist Army families in managing their particular circumstances. A WSG program cannot achieve this purpose if it is a series of isolated events. The program must be an integrated part of the command’s commitment to family support, including sponsorship of WSGs and open, well-defined lines of communication. This pamphlet has been designed to help all levels of command and family support activities plan and evaluate WSG programs as part of their overall family support effort. However, with the assistance of the Human Resource Council (AR 608-1, chap 2, sec III), sponsoring agencies and family support activities should tailor these materials for use in their communities.

1-2. The Army widowed and their benefits

The Army widowed fall into several categories determined by the length of service and status of the deceased soldier. For more complete information please see DA Pamphlet 608-4, A Guide for the Survivors of Deceased Army Members. Each category has different benefits and concerns.

a. The following table (see table 1-1.) will begin to define the group to be served:

Table 1-1
Survivor Benefits

Benefit to Survivor	Less than 20 years		More than 20 years	
	Active Duty	Medically Retired	Active Duty	Retired
DIC*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SBP** (Spouse)	No	Yes (minus DIC annuity)	Yes (minus DIC annuity)	Yes (minus DIC annuity)
Social Security (Spouse only)***	Yes (If age 60)	Yes (If age 60)	Yes (If age 60)	Yes (If age 60)

Table 1-1
Survivor Benefits—Continued

Benefit to Survivor	Less than 20 years		More than 20 years	
	Active Duty	Medically Retired	Active Duty	Retired
Social Security (Spouse and child)***	Yes (If child under age 16)	Yes (If child under age 16)	Yes (If child under age 16)	Yes (If child under age 16)

Notes:

* Dependent's Indemnity Compensation (Veteran's Administration) payable only for service connected cause of death and as long as the survivor is unremarried. DIC can be reinstated if remarriage is terminated due to death, divorce or annulment.

** Survivor Benefit Plan (U.S. Army Finance Center) is paid only if the active duty soldier is retirement eligible or if the retiree has elected and for as long as the survivor has not remarried or is over 55 when remarried. Amount payable is reduced by DIC and when the recipient is eligible, by Social Security. Recipients are supported by Army Retirement Services, represented on Retiree Councils and are kept up-to-date through ARMY ECHOES (a periodic newsletter). SBP can be reinstated if remarriage is terminated due to death, divorce or annulment.

*** Social Security eligibility is dependent upon years of work and amount of contribution to the system. Spouse benefit is reduced proportionally by income earned in excess of \$5760 annually unless over the age of 70. The amount of a child's social security benefit is not influenced by the parent's income. Spouse's benefit is terminated if remarriage is before age 60. If remarried after 60 benefits continue. If child marries, child's benefit is terminated.

b. Surviving spouses who have not remarried and children in school up to age 23, are usually entitled to all Identification Card (ID) privileges in CONUS which include: post exchange (AAFES), commissary, medical care and Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS), legal advice, and Army Community Service (ACS).

c. Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits are available only to spouses and children of active duty deceased and spouses and children of retirees who die of a service connected cause.

d. If the Army family is living in Government quarters or is overseas, currently (as of October 1986) the family must move within 3 months. The surviving spouse is entitled to one move within one year after the soldier's death.

Chapter 2

Planning and Organizing Widowed Support Group Programs

2-1. General

a. This chapter outlines the major steps in planning and organizing WSG programs.

b. The development of a volunteer "mutual self help" program is encouraged. Involving widowed persons who have made a satisfactory adjustment (after approximately 2 years of bereavement) provides the optimum way to serve the newly bereaved (see app A). This program is based on the concept that significant help can come from someone who has experienced a similar loss and is willing (with training) to share the trauma of another. Additionally, a WSG program brings together and coordinates local resources available to serve the Army widowed.

c. The general WSG goal in each Army community is to provide—

(1) *Outreach*. This is a process of contacting newly widowed persons and offering them visits and communication with widowed people who have adjusted to widowhood and are prepared to openly discuss on a one-to-one basis problems the newly bereaved confront. It is generally assumed that volunteers should not contact the newly bereaved until about 4 to 8 weeks after the funeral. In some cases support may be rendered earlier (the casualty assistance officer (CAO) may make a request or the volunteer may be personally acquainted with the spouse).

(2) *Telephone support service*. Utilizing the ACS Information, Referral, and Follow-up Program, a directory should be developed to provide easy reference to local services and appropriate agencies or personnel of special interest to Army widowed. This ACS telephone service is already widely publicized and can be enhanced so that the community can call for WSG program information or to request service from the WSG.

(3) *Support group meetings*. Based on the needs of group members and the availability of qualified leadership, meetings for newly bereaved and/or persons widowed longer should be held. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a situation where people with a common bond can discuss issues of mutual interest, learn how to help each other, and initiate social and personal contacts.

(4) *Public Education*. Through local organizations, public service agencies, workshops, and the media, the program and the needs of widowed persons are brought to the attention of the community. To share deep sorrow is to accept its reality and acknowledge the fact that no one is immune from death. Readiness is supported when soldiers are confident that their families will be cared for in all situations.

2-2. Developing an organizational structure

Developing an organizational structure includes—

a. Conducting a planning session.

- b. Determining the scope of service.
- c. Selecting a sponsoring agency.
- d. Recruiting and training volunteers.
- e. Reaching out to the newly bereaved.
- f. Planning support group meetings.
- g. Publicizing services and meetings.
- h. Designing informational handouts.
- i. Acquiring support and supplies.

2-3. Conducting a planning session

a. An initial planning session should be held and include representative widowed persons from the community as well as representatives from major installation family support activities that provide services required by the Army widowed. A suggested planning group should include—

- (1) Army Community Service representative.
- (2) Post Chaplain/Family Life Chaplain.
- (3) Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) representative/community mental health activity representative.
- (4) Staff Judge Advocate representative.
- (5) Public Affairs representative.
- (6) Retired Services officer.
- (7) Installation Casualty officer.
- (8) Widowed representatives.

b. The goal of the planning session is to determine the scope of services available, to assess community needs (size of widowed population, average age, local problems, etc.) and to establish WSG program objectives (outreach support for newly bereaved, social reintegration or an overall encompassing program).

2-4. Sponsoring agency

A sponsoring agency will be selected to support the initiation of a WSG program and to provide long-term assistance. This assistance is the Army family link and may include—

- a. Arranging for a meeting place.
- b. Providing publicity and information.
- c. Providing administrative support.
- d. Providing management and training of volunteers.

2-5. Recruiting and training volunteers

Recruiting and training volunteers will be facilitated by an Installation Volunteer Coordinator (IVC).

a. *Volunteer qualifications.* Some specific qualifications for recruiting WSG volunteers that must be considered are as follows:

- (1) Volunteers must be willing to help another who is experiencing the tragic loss of a spouse.
- (2) Contact volunteers should have been widowed for about 2 years.
- (3) Contact volunteers must demonstrate by virtue of their lifestyle that they can be helpful to someone who is experiencing the tragic loss of a spouse.

(4) A WSG volunteer job description is attached in appendix B. These requirements clarify expected duties.

b. *Volunteer training.* Volunteer training is available from many installation sources and should include:

- (1) An overview of the WSG program.
- (2) Understanding and coping with the grief process.
- (3) Communication.
- (4) Dealing with special problems.
- (5) Role playing.
- (6) Community resources.

c. *Training resources.* Excellent volunteer training resource materials are available from:

- (1) The Army Community Service, Family Life Centers and Installation Volunteer Coordinators.
- (2) The AARP Widowed Persons Service (active in over 150 communities across the United States).
- (3) Other resource organizations and books are listed in appendix C.

2-6. Reaching out to the newly bereaved

A coordinator should be selected to obtain and receive the names, addresses, telephone numbers and ages of newly widowed persons plus identifying information on the deceased sponsor. (Experience indicates that only half of retiree deaths are reported through the Casualty Office.) This information may be obtained through arrangements with the

Casualty Office or Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO). This information must be treated with utmost confidentiality. Privacy Act regulations must be observed. Volunteers should be advised that they are liable under the criminal and civil provisions of the Privacy Act, just as government employees are. After formation is received, the following steps will then need to be coordinated:

- a. Select a volunteer from the same geographical area and age group if possible.
- b. The volunteer will contact the widowed by telephone or preferably by letter approximately 4 to 8 weeks after the funeral. (A sample letter is at fig 2-1.)
- c. The volunteer will follow up by telephone to arrange an appointment to see the new widow/widower. A meeting for lunch on neutral ground provides the opportunity to offer empathy instead of sympathy—to talk to someone who knows little about the family or the past. These contacts should continue until, by mutual agreement, they are considered no longer necessary.
- d. When the newly bereaved feel comfortable with the volunteer, they should be encouraged to attend group meetings. Studies have shown bereavement support groups to be the best method for a healthy transition to a changed lifestyle. The process generally takes about 2 years. Appendix A provides a detailed explanation.

2-7. Planning WSG meetings

Choosing a date-time-location.

a. In selecting an appropriate date consider the known widowed in the local area, their activities and local events. Also consider whether or not children should be included and their bereavement addressed.

b. Time selection is a difficult task as many widowed are working and may have children at home. If the identified target group is large, consider both daytime and evening meeting. If only one meeting is decided upon, most likely an evening time would attract the greatest number. The length of the first meeting will depend on choices made in content, but a general rule is not to exceed 2 hours. Shown below are some options and guides to be coordinated with the meeting participants.

(1) *Weekday afternoon:*

(a) Approximately 1300.

(b) Provide child care for children not in school.

(2) *Weekday morning:*

(a) Approximately 0930.

(b) Ensure children are in school.

(3) *Weekday evening:*

(a) 1800/1900/1930.

(b) Provide child care.

(4) *Transportation.* Coordinate ride share arrangements.

(5) *Location.* Location and meeting area size are crucial. Ensure that the space available can accommodate the anticipated number of attendees and that there is adequate parking nearby. Consider the first meeting an opportunity to develop a “sense of family.”

2-8. Programs for WSG meetings

a. *Program content.* Consider two types of content: Emotional factors and practical aspects.

b. *Presentation.* Creativity in content and method of presentation are critical to full participation. Group facilitators should lead discussions on stress management, on anger control and on grief work. Attendees should be actively involved in the program. They may have coping skills to share with others present.

c. *Selecting speakers.* Be creative and sensitive to both individual and family needs. From the list below, select speakers who are dynamic and determined most appropriate, add others as desired. Programs should be repeated periodically for the benefit of new group members. Active participation by the commanding officer and the post sergeant major is desirable for promoting the total Army family concept.

(1) Commanding Officer.

(2) Sergeant Major.

(3) ACS representative.

(4) Staff Judge Advocate (Estate Planning and Wills).

(5) Army Emergency Relief (AER) representative.

(6) American Red Cross (ARC) representative.

(7) Chaplain.

(8) Provost Marshal.

(9) Medical treatment facility (MTF) bereavement counselor.

(10) Finance and Accounting representative (Financial Planning).

(11) Retirement services officer.

- (12) Casualty representative.
- (13) Director of Personnel and Community Activities.
- (14) Education representative (College Funding and Loans).
- (15) Veterans Administration representative.
- (16) Internal Revenue Service representative.
- (17) Certified Financial Planner.

2-9. Publicizing programs

- a.* Provide good publicity through as many sources as possible. Some ways of getting the word out are—
 - (1) A personal letter mailed from the commanding officer to each known widowed person (strongly recommended).
 - (2) Newsletter.
 - (3) Post newspaper.
 - (4) Daily bulletin.
 - (5) Local newspapers.
 - (6) Public service TV and radio stations.
 - (7) Civilian widowed support groups.
 - (8) Military Hospital Personnel.
 - (9) Wives Organizations.
 - (10) Mortuaries.

b. Names and addresses of the widowed living in installation catchment areas can be obtained (for official use only) through the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). To obtain this information a formal request (via official letter) should be sent to: DEERS Support Office, 2100 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940-5387. The request must contain specific information desired to include the catchment area zip codes.

2-10. Determining handouts

Attendees appreciate receiving an agenda of program events. It is important to provide program information in the form of a handout that includes—

- a.* Mailing address of the sponsoring agency.
- b.* Name and telephone number of a point of contact in the sponsoring agency.
- c.* Speaker's names, agencies, and telephone numbers.
- d.* Installation family assistance handbook.
- e.* Examples of other ideas for handouts are figure 2-2 and figure 2-3.

2-11. Determining supplies

Some of the following items are necessary for meetings.

- a.* Printed program/agenda and handouts.
- b.* Individual information forms for volunteers and/or members.
- c.* Family member checklists.
- d.* ACS brochures/leaflets.
- e.* Installation family assistance handbook.
- f.* List of installation points of contact (with phone numbers) that provide services needed by the widowed.

(WSG address)

(WSG phone number)

Mrs. Army Spouse
111 South Street
Any Town, State Zip

Dear Mrs. Spouse:

I wish to express my sympathy on the death of your husband.

I am a widow and a volunteer with the Army Widowed Support Group, a local program concerned about the widowed in our Army community. My husband died, *number* years ago, after many years of marriage. After the shock and numbness wore off, I realized how alone I was. Friends and family were helpful but did not really understand what I was going through.

I was asked to contact you and offer my assistance. You might find it helpful to talk to someone who has been there and knows what it's like.

I would like to visit with you (date), (time). I will call you to make an appointment in a few days. If you wish to contact me earlier, please call me through our Widowed Support Group telephone service above.

Sincerely,

(Volunteer)

Figure 2-1. Sample letter

Housing

A big question for the Army widowed is where family members will live. There are two choices: (a) near relatives in order to have certain family support if required and (b) away from relatives in order to live an independent life. Pros and cons of each choice are presented below.

Near Relatives

PRO

- (a) Family support when needed.
- (b) Closeness to others who are familiar and loved.
- (c) Familiar surroundings.
- (d) Family during holidays.

CON

- (a) The danger that relatives may try to take over control.
- (b) The danger that spouse will be caught up in family concerns to the extent that his or her every day life may be hampered by problems not his or her own: "Can't you at least help Junior with his math?" "I cleaned up after you. Now I'm sick. It's your turn to clean up my house!"

Away from Relatives

- (a) A sense of independence and the possibility of meeting one's own goals.
- (b) A chance to live according to one's own life plan: What's right or wrong, good or bad for me—without the unsolicited opinions of family.
- (c) To allow relatives to deal with their own problems.

- (a) The necessity of managing in what may be a neighborhood of strangers.
- (b) The absence of someone close should a real crisis occur.

If it is necessary to live apart from relatives, the widowed can—

- (a) Develop friendships with trusted people who can offer support if needed.
- (b) Learn about community services available that can provide support in times of trouble.
- (c) Have an option to move near relatives should living apart not work out.
- (d) Seek out widowed support groups for mutual social support.

Figure 2-2. An example of a handout on program topic

Surviving, Healing and Growing from a Loss

- Surviving:**
1. Recognize the loss
 2. Be with the pain (admit it)
 3. You're not all alone
 4. You will survive (you will heal)
 5. Give yourself time to heal
 6. Recognize that healing process has progressions as well as regressions
 7. Maintain good health habits including nutrition, exercise and rest.
 8. Keep decision making to a minimum (your judgement may be clouded)
 9. It's o.k. to need comforting
 10. Seek support of others
 11. Reaffirm your beliefs (be they religious or philosophical)
 12. There may be thoughts of suicide (it's normal but if they start getting out of hand, seek professional help *at once!*). This feeling will pass.
- Healing:**
1. Do your mourning now, accept your grief—(the sooner you allow yourself to be with your pain the sooner it will pass)
 2. Be gentle with yourself
 3. Give yourself time to heal fully
 4. Mementos—if these help, use them.
 5. Anticipate a positive outcome
 6. Allow yourself to feel depressed (It's o.k. to be low keyed for a while)
 7. It's o.k. to feel anger (*Everyone* gets angry at the loss of a loved one) Express it—don't keep it in and don't hate yourself
 8. Pamper yourself
 9. Heal at your own pace
- Growing:**
1. Forgive the other person
 2. Forgive yourself
 3. You are a better person for having loved
 4. Changes—prepare to make adjustments
 5. Praise yourself for the courage to relate
 6. Start anew
 7. Invite new people into your life
 8. Develop new interests—but don't forget old interests
 9. Do something for someone else
 10. Recognize your renewed sense of appreciation
 11. Enjoy your new growth
 12. Enjoy your freedom to choose
 13. Pat yourself on the back for having survived, healed and grown through a tortuous transition

Figure 2-3. Sample information handout for a WSG meeting

Chapter 3 Evaluating the Widowed Support Group Program Meeting

3-1. Simple Evaluation Form provides Feedback

A simple evaluation form should be completed by participants after each meeting before they leave. This can help identify how the group feels about the program and can provide valuable insight for planning future meetings. A sample evaluation format is at figure 3-1.

3-2. Sample of a Widowed Support Group Evaluation

Sample of a Widowed Support Group Evaluation

We would appreciate your assistance in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the WSG meeting. Your comments will be used to evaluate our program and will influence the direction of future activities.

1. My interest in the subjects discussed:

High
Above average
Average
Below average
Low

2. Usefulness of the information presented by meeting speakers:

High
Above average
Average
Below average
Low

3. Planning and organization of the meeting:

High
Above average
Average
Below average
Low

4. Overall evaluation of the WSG program:

High
Above average
Average
Below average
Low

5. What information was most useful to you?

6. Is there any subject you would add?

7. Please add other thoughts or suggestions for future activities.

8. How long have you been widowed?

9. How many WSG meetings have you attended?

10. If you are experiencing any particular problem and would like to be contacted, please describe briefly and give your name and phone number.

Figure 3-1. Sample evaluation format

Appendix A

Needs of the Widowed

A-1. The Hierarchy of Human Needs

The requirement for volunteers to have been widowed for two years is based on Abraham Maslow's theory of a Hierarchy of Needs.* Mr. Maslow recognized that people have several needs, some of which underlie others. That is, certain physiological needs must be met, before people can devote very much time or energy to cultural and more subtle aspects of life. He illustrates the theory as shown in figure A-1.

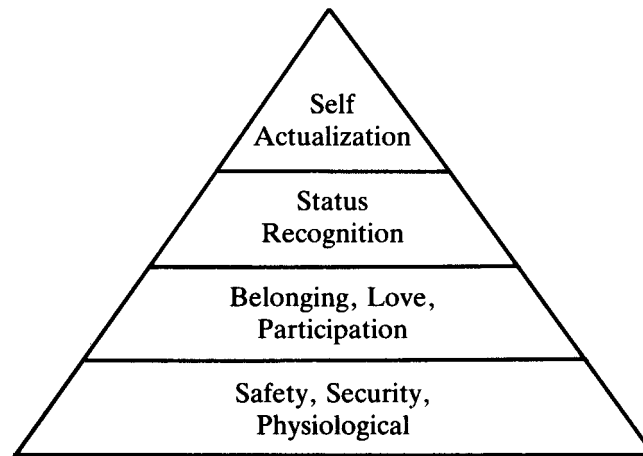


Figure A-1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

As underlying needs are substantially satisfied it is a human trait that other needs surface. This concept is helpful in understanding the behavior vacillation and reaction of people newly widowed. It illustrates how inappropriate it is to challenge the person frightened about personal safety to do volunteer work, take up a new hobby or go back to college.

A-2. Individual needs

This theory is useful in dealing with the bereaved. In order to help, we must not impose our assessment of their needs upon the newly widowed. They must be allowed to deal with their needs as they conceive them.

A-3. Description of each level (hierarchy) of human needs

a. Physiological needs. Food, water, air, sleep, shelter, and freedom from disease or injury are all elemental needs for our survival. If we are deprived of any of these, the need becomes so dominant that all others will be forced aside. Until we feel these elemental survival needs can be met with some regularity we cannot tolerate someone else's assumption that we ought to be meeting a higher level need.

b. Safety/Security. To feel safe, protected, generally in control of the stabilizing factors of life and to feel secure in personal relations are all aspects of this need. Until security is felt people remain imprisoned in their own world of worry.

c. Belonging, love, participation. This need is normally satisfied in marriage and family. After losing a spouse people feel unattached, like a stranger, even in familiar places. At this stage contact by volunteers is most effective. They should encourage the newly widowed to respond to situations that allow appropriate social contacts.

d. Status recognition. Self-esteem, self-respect, and our acceptance by respected others are goals of this need. Because of the death of the spouse, the widowed may be deprived of their principle source of status and recognition in the community. This in turn often raises questions of their "worth," their sense of personal identity, and whether they will be able to maintain their previous status. A support group can provide appreciation and recognition of worth.

e. Self actualization. Most people, in order to be a good marriage partner and to fulfill family commitments, do not

* Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper & Rowe, Publishers, Incorporated, 1954)

exercise potential talents. Newly widowed people often fear it is too late to be all they can be—that their talent is lost. Support groups encourage exploration of opportunities that presently exist.

A-4. Changing needs

The widowed are not in a static situation. They move up and down on the hierarchy as their feelings change about themselves, their environment and their relationships with others. By using knowledge about the hierarchy of needs as a tool to understand what level of need a person is working on, widowed support groups can be of great help.

Appendix B

Sample of a Standard Operating Procedure and Job Description for a Widowed Support Group

B-1. Sample of a Standard Operating Procedure for a Widowed Support Group Program

Program Coordinator: (sponsoring agency) Volunteer Chairperson Authority: AR 608-1, chapter 2, requires that the Army Community Service Program have outreach programs that provide support to soldiers and their families.

1. Purpose.

The purpose of the Widowed Support Group (WSG) is to provide practical, emotional and experiential support to the widows and widowers of soldiers/retirees in the (installation/community) area and to assist, as needed, the Casualty Affairs office.

2. Objectives.

The objectives of the Army WSG program are to:

- a. Identify those widows/widowers in need of companionship and/or grief support.
- b. Offer widows/widowers resources, companionship, emotional and practical support on an individual basis.
- c. Act as a resource agent by providing references to other support groups.

3. Eligibility.

Participants are widows or widowers of soldiers in the (installation/community) area.

4. Staff.

The WSG program is staffed by trained volunteers who themselves are widows/widowers. The volunteers have themselves been widowed for about 2 years, a requirement which assures recent widows and widowers sympathetic support and help from an individual who has had a similar experience.

5. Referrals.

Generally, referrals are made, in writing, by the (installation/community) Casualty Affairs Office to the (sponsoring agency) coordinator, who in turn gives the names to the chairperson of the WSG program. Referrals will be accepted from other community resources.

a. Information from the Casualty Affairs Office includes name, address, telephone number and age of widow/widower plus identifying information on the deceased spouse.

b. The Chairperson has the responsibility to assign the newly widowed to a trained volunteer contact. Every effort is made to match a volunteer and the newly widowed by age and geographical proximity.

c. In turn, the volunteer will contact the widow/widower by letter and, if needed, by telephone. The volunteer will keep a brief description of contacts made. The following information should be recorded.

- (1) Volunteers' Name:
- (2) Date assigned:
- (3) Information on widowed person.
 - (a) Name:
 - (b) Address:
 - (c) Telephone number:
- (4) Information on deceased.
 - (a) Name:
 - (b) Rank:
 - (c) Cause of death:
- (5) Action record.
 - (a) First contact:
() Letter () Telephone () Visit
 - (b) What do you feel are the widowed person's needs?

- (c) How did the widowed person respond to you?

(d) Do you feel it is necessary to follow up? (Give brief explanation.)

(e) Any other comments?

6. Duration of Assistance.

Widows/widowers may participate in the program as long as they need or want the support of the WSG service.

7. Records.

Identifying information and records are afforded the same respect and confidentiality as other family records. The program's chairperson will keep a list of names of persons referred to volunteers. Records of contacts will be given to the (sponsoring agency) coordinator, kept in a locked file and destroyed every 2 years.

8. Training.

The contacted volunteer widowed must attend the installation's volunteer training program before beginning their volunteer work. The training will include an overview of (sponsoring agency) and the WSG program; understanding and coping with the grief process; communication; dealing with special problems (i.e., alcoholism, depression); role playing and community resources.

The chairperson will hold bimonthly meetings where volunteers are encouraged to attend and discuss issues and concerns regarding their support services to clients and the program.

9. Supervision.

The (sponsoring agency) coordinator will provide supervision to the program and volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to contact a social worker any time they have a concern for a widow/widower.

The (sponsoring agency) coordinator is responsible for providing the volunteers with timely and appropriate assistance to enhance their work. This is best achieved through attendance at their bimonthly meeting.

B-2. Sample of a Widowed Support Group Job Description

Position Title. Chairperson, Widowed Support Group Program

Supervisor. Volunteer Supervisor/Staff Coordinator. **Job Description.** Recruit volunteers and provide resource materials and suggestions for training. Prepare publicity for program and recruitment. Assign and monitor all cases that are referred. Hold meetings at least quarterly with volunteers to discuss progress of assigned cases. Meet with staff coordinator monthly. Update and revise forms used for monitoring cases. Keep accurate files on all assigned cases.

Time Required. Monthly meetings and additional time required for record keeping. Probably 8-10 hours monthly.

In-Service Training Provided. Sponsoring agency orientation and twice yearly workshops.

Qualifications and Special Skills. Chairperson must have been widowed for 2 years. Have the ability to communicate with people of varied backgrounds and the ability to listen and be empathetic. Have an honest desire to help and the knowledge to refer the client to the proper agencies for additional assistance.

Appendix C Resources

C-1. Organizations

Organizations may already be active in your local area, check in your local yellow pages. Installation family activities such as Army Community Service and the AG Retirement Services Office offer widowed support and information. The following are some of the national organizations that assist the widowed:

a. AMERICAN RED CROSS, Service to Military Families Division, 2025 E St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Telephone: (202) 728-6400. Purpose: To respond to identified needs of the members of the Armed Forces and their families on an individual basis.

b. ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332. Telephone: (703) 960-3982. Purpose: To assist Army personnel and their families with emergency financial problems. Provides loans and grants. Representatives are located at most installations.

c. ARMY MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION, Fort Myer, Arlington, VA 22211-5002. Telephone: (703) 522-3060.

d. ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, 2425 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201. Telephone: (703) 841-4300. Purpose: To support programs that lead to a strong national defense. Local chapters are interested in all aspects of Army life, including people oriented programs.

e. COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC., National Office: P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696. Telephone: (312) 323-5010. An organization primarily supporting parents of children who have died.

f. DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS NETWORK, 1010 Vermont Avenue N.W., Suite 817, Washington D.C. 20005. Telephone: (202) 628-6767. A national umbrella organization that links people around the country who care about displaced homemakers.

g. GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC., 1537 Potomac Heights, Ft. Washington, MD 20744, Telephone: (301) 248-3742. An organization of widows who receive Dependent's Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Veterans Administration.

h. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES, 5535 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151-4094. Telephone: (703) 750-1342. Supports legislation to provide fair and equitable consideration for all members of the Uniformed Services and their spouses, widows and widowers.

i. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MILITARY WIDOWS, 4023 25th Road N., Arlington, VA 22207. Telephone: (703) 527-4565. An organization for widows of all servicemen of all branches of the military.

j. NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ASSOCIATION, 2666 Military Rd., Arlington, VA 22207. Telephone: (703) 841-0462. Purpose: To advocate legislation which benefits military families and to create greater awareness of the importance of the role of the military family and the military spouse.

k. THE RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (TROA), 201 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2529. Telephone: (703) 549-2311. Supports legislation beneficial to military officers and their families. Research, scholarships and informative pamphlets available.

l. WIDOWED PERSONS SERVICE, Program Department, AARP, 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049. Technical support for the development and organization of a local Widowed Persons Service program including organizational, consultative, recruitment and training assistance is available through AARP.

C-2. Books on organizing widowed programs

a. *Widowed Persons Service Organization Manual*. NRTA-AARP, Widowed Persons Service, 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049.

b. *Creative Community Services For Widows*. Hiltz, S.R. A Pilot Project, Port Washington, NY, Kennikat Press.

c. *Helping Each Other In Widowhood*. Silverman, Phyllis. Health Services Publishing, Corp., NY, 1975.

Glossary

Section I Abbreviations

AAFES

Army and Air Force Exchange System

AARP

American Association of Retired Persons

ACS

Army Community Service

AER

Army Emergency Relief

AR

Army Regulation

ARC

American Red Cross

ARNG

Army National Guard

CAO

Casualty Assistance Office

CHAMPUS

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services

CFSC

US Army Community and Family Support Center

CONUS

Continental United States

DEERS

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

DIC

Dependents Indemnity Compensation

DPCA

Director of Personnel and Community Activities

FS

Family Support, Army Community Service

HQDA

Headquarters, Department of the Army

ID

Identification Card

IVC

Installation Volunteer Coordinator

SBP

Survivor Benefit Plan

SOP

Standard Operating Procedure

USAR

U.S. Army Reserve

VA

Veterans Administration

WSC

Widowed Support Center

WSG

Widowed Support Group

Section II**Terms**

This section contains no entries.

Section III**Special Abbreviations and Terms**

This section contains no entries.

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